



## Chapter 10- Permits

### Construction Permitting Overview

#### Purpose

This chapter will help applicants understand the process of applying for permits from the City of Wichita. Included is information about permit applications, permit fees, adopted codes, licensing and bonding requirements, the steps involved in building projects and other helpful hints necessary to obtain permits.

Applications for construction permits on private parcels of land (and not located in public street, sidewalk or utility right-of-way) are obtained through the Office of Central Inspection (OCI). Permit application processes are divided into two categories: (1) one and two-family construction/remodeling; and (2) multi-family, office, commercial and industrial construction/remodeling (hereinafter referred to as “commercial” construction/remodeling). The application review and permit issuance processes for these categories of construction are significantly different in terms of required application detail and the time required to complete application review/approval.

Building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and/or sewer construction permits, or structure demolition and/or interior demolition permits, are required for the following:

- Certain site development activity such as excavation, grading, or placement of fill
- Constructing, enlarging, altering, remodeling or demolishing a structure or

space including new structures, additions, most decks, masonry fences, swimming pools, etc.

- changing the use of a building or space regardless of construction operations
- installing or replacing any building wiring or equipment such as branch electrical circuits, electrical panels, water heaters, furnaces, air conditioners, water or gas piping, water or sewage drain lines, water and sewer service lines, etc.
- installing or altering any fire suppression, detection or fire alarm systems
- installing or substantially altering elevators, lifts or escalators

In addition to the above, a Flood Plain Development Permit/Application is required for any excavation, fill or building development located in a Federal Flood Plain. Federal Flood Plain maps are available in the Office of Central Inspection, and in the Stormwater Management Office of Public Works (located on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall), 316-268-4498. See OCI “Flood Plain Development Permit/Application” and Flood Plain Elevation Certificate/Flood Plain Development Information” forms/information in Appendix.

#### Permit Exceptions

Construction permits are not required for routine maintenance such as painting, carpeting, wallpapering, installing cabinets and shelving, replacing plumbing fixtures

(faucets, handles, etc.), replacing lighting fixtures or damaged electrical outlets, etc. Other specific exceptions include:

- Installing storm windows and doors
- Replacing windows or doors where the size or location of the window or door opening is not changed
- Installing new or replacement driveways and sidewalks on private property
- Constructing, replacing a wire or wood fence eight feet high or less
- Repairing or replacing roof shingles or siding that is less than 400 square feet in total area
- Replacing sheetrock, plaster or other similar wall or ceiling covering when the area replaced does not exceed 100 square feet
- Constructing, replacing or repairing uncovered patios
- Constructing, replacing or repairing uncovered exterior decks, porches or stoops not more than 30 inches above grade and not built over a basement or another story/floor level

### **Who Can Obtain a Permit?**

Generally, a contractor who is tested by the City of Wichita, licensed, and insured to perform the relevant construction work may obtain permits. Details of the City's contractor licensing are outlined in greater detail below.

**Homeowners**-Occupants of single-family dwellings are allowed to obtain their own permits and perform construction work on their residence. Such residential building permits may cover all facets of a project, including structural, building, plumbing, electric and mechanical work. However, before performing any plumbing, electrical or mechanical work, the homeowner-occupant must pass a simple code examination and submit a basic plan for the

proposed installation. Examinations are by appointment only. For electrical examinations call 268-4465, and for plumbing or mechanical examinations call 268-4471. Examinations are open book.

### **Suspension of Permit Application or Permit**

– Construction permit applications or permits may be suspended if no response to a review has been made, no activity has been recorded, or substantial progress has not been made for six months. Once a permit is suspended, a new permit may have to be obtained.

### **Adopted Codes**

All ordinances and requirements for construction and related permits are contained in the Code of the City of Wichita, Kansas (CCWK). The CCWK adopts by reference nationally recognized construction codes with local amendments. The following is a summary of relevant chapters of the CCWK regulating development and construction activity, along with related codes that are adopted by reference. Please note that all CCWK codes are available on the City's web site at [www.wichita.gov](http://www.wichita.gov). In addition, model construction codes that are adopted by reference are available for purchase in the Office of Central Inspection (at City cost).

- CCWK Chapter 2.12.1015 – 1026 – Historic Preservation Ordinance
- CCWK Chapter 7 - Public Health Code (restaurants, food establishments, water wells, septic and other on-site sewage systems, odor regulations, spas and swimming pools)
- CCWK Chapter 10.16 - Driveways and Curb Cuts
- CCWK Chapter 10.32 - Landscaping and Parking Lot Screening

- CCWK Chapter 15 – Fire Protection (2000 International Fire Code, with local amendments)
- CCWK Chapter 16 – Sewers, Sewage Disposal and Drains (also includes specific requirements for Stormwater Pollution Prevention, grease interceptors for food service preparation/restaurants and industrial waste pre-treatment)
- CCWK Chapter 17 – Water (specifically lawn irrigation systems and water services)
- CCWK Chapter 18 – Building Code
  - 2000 International Building Code, with local amendments
  - 2000 International Residential Code, with local amendments
- CCWK Chapter 18.44 – Existing Buildings Rehabilitation and Change of Use Code
- CCWK Chapter 19 – Electrical Code (2005 National Electrical Code with local amendments)
- CCWK Chapter 21 – Plumbing Code (2000 Uniform Plumbing Code, with local amendments)
- CCWK Chapter 22 – Mechanical Code (2000 International Mechanical Code, with local amendments)
- CCWK Chapter 27 – Local Flood Damage Prevention Code
- CCWK Chapter 28.04 - Wichita-Sedgwick County Uniform Zoning Code
- CCWK Chapter 28.05 - Wichita-Sedgwick County Subdivision Regulations
- CCWK Chapter 28.07 – Airport Overlay Districts
- CCWK Chapter 28.08 – Airport Hazard Zoning Code

### Other relevant regulations

- Kansas Accessibility Act (ADAAG)
- Federal ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities

- Federal Fair Housing Act
- City of Wichita Access Management Policy (traffic control, driveway locations, etc.)

## Licensing, Certification and Bonding Requirements

### Technical/Design Professions

Kansas Statutes Annotated (K.S.A.) Chapter 74, Article 70, requires that any person who performs professional services or creative work, such as consultation, planning, designing or responsible supervision in the practice of architecture, engineering, landscape architecture or land surveying be registered and licensed with the State of Kansas Board of Technical Professions. *Article 70 does not apply to one and two-family residential construction.*

For the reasonable and practical administration of this Statute and Section 106 of the International Building Code, as adopted by the City of Wichita, nearly all commercial plan submittal documents are required to be sealed by architects, engineers, landscape architects and/or land surveyors who are licensed by the Kansas State Board of Technical Professions. A more detailed policy statement regarding submission of design documents for commercial building permit review is available from OCI and is included in the Appendix.

### Contractors

The City of Wichita has an extensive construction contractor testing, certification and licensing program. Nearly all general building, electrical, elevator/escalator, mechanical, plumbing, sewer/drain-laying and wrecking/demolition contractors performing work that requires a permit are required by the City to be licensed, and to carry and maintain minimum levels of

insurance to further protect the consumer. Additionally, some contractors, such as sewer and drain laying contractors, are required to carry and maintain a minimum insurance bond.

Contractor tests are administered by nationally recognized contractor testing agencies, including Exporior, International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO), and International Code Council (ICC) are given frequently at national and local testing sites. After initial licensing, contractors are required to annually renew their licenses with the City of Wichita.

In addition, the City requires that electrical, mechanical, plumbing and other similar tradesmen working for licensed electrical, mechanical, plumbing and sewer contractors are certified to perform installation work, and that these tradesmen also annually renew their certifications.

*Note: Model construction codes that are adopted by reference in the City Codes are available for purchase in the Office of Central Inspection (at City cost).*

The City does have a provision to allow issuance of a one-time license to a general building contractor, without testing or payment of an annual license fee, if the contractor can show to the satisfaction of the City that he is otherwise qualified to construct the on-time project, and is appropriately insured.

Questions regarding contractor licensing may be directed to the OCI licensing staff at (316) 268-4413.

## **Fees and Associated Costs**

Fees are charged for a variety of services provided with construction permitting. OCI plan review and permit fees cover the cost of plan review, as well as inspection for

compliance with City ordinances and requirements during construction. OCI permit fees may be paid with cash, check or most credit cards. Following is a list of fees and other costs that may be associated with OCI construction permit applications/permits.

- **Building Plan Review Fee** – This fee is only charged for commercial construction/remodeling projects, and is collected when project plans are submitted for a building permit. The basic plan review fee is 65% of the base building permit fee (see below). Additional plan review fees may be charged for progress prints or conditional/phased permits.
- **Building Permit Fee** – Building permit fees for both one and two-family and commercial construction are based on project value as determined from the square footage of new construction or additions, or on a valid construction contract cost, and for remodeling, on the value of a valid construction project contract.
- **Trade permit fees (electrical, mechanical, plumbing and sewer)**
  - For one and two family construction/remodeling, these trade permit fees may be included as part of a single “combination” residential building permit, and are based on a percentage of the building permit value. In this case, the trade fees are collected as part of the one and two-family residential building permit.
  - For commercial construction projects, and for any trade permit not associated with a residential “combination” building permit (such as water heaters, furnaces, new electrical circuits and panels, etc.),

separate trade permits are issued with fees calculated from the number and size of water heaters, furnaces, electrical circuits, outlets, electric service panels, etc.

- **Wrecking/Demolition Permits**
  - For building demolitions, permit fees are based on the square footage of the building being demolished.
  - For interior demolition work where the building will remain (interior wall coverings, partition walls, etc.), the permit fee is based on the value of a valid demolition contract cost.
- **Grading/Excavation/Fill Permits** – These fees are generally included in the base fees for a building permit application. However, when a building

permit is only for grading, excavation or fill, the fee is based on the number of cubic yards included in the grading, excavation or filling operation.

- **Parking Lot Permits** – Parking lot permits that are not associated with construction of a new building, an addition or a building remodeling project are issued as building permits. The permit fee is based on the number of parking lot spaces.
- **Temporary Electrical Construction Service** - \$10 for one and two-family construction and \$10 - \$25 for commercial construction.

## Building Permit Steps

### Step 1 – Application

Application materials and forms are obtained from the Office of Central Inspection (OCI).

Applications may be submitted in several ways, including:

- At the permit desk in the Office of Central Inspection on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall
- By mail: City Hall, OCI 7<sup>th</sup> floor, 455 N. Main Wichita, KS 67202.
- By fax: (316-268-4663) For one and two-family construction/remodeling permits of any type, for commercial roofing and siding permits, and for any trade permits (electrical, mechanical, plumbing and sewer). Licensed construction contractors may participate in the OCI Fax Permit Program for the above types of permits, whereby OCI will review and issue a permit approval (or denial) by fax within a minimum of 24 hours of the faxed application receipt (excluding sewer permits that have a maximum 48 hour review turn-around time). Participation in the Fax Permit Program also allows

## Process Improvement Points

The Office of Central Inspection's website at <http://wichita.gov/CityOffices/OCI/> is a great source of information for questions the handbook may not address. Please visit the website for additional information including frequently asked questions.

contractors to pay automatically for each permit issued by credit card, or by cash or check on a weekly basis for all permits issued during the previous week.

## Process Improvement Points

*The following information must be submitted with the application for a building or trade permit.*

### For One and Two-Family Residential Building Permits

- Residential Permit Application Form (this is not required if the application is made in person at the permit counter). See form in Appendix.
- Legal description and property tax control number for the site. Property tax control numbers can be obtained by calling the County Appraiser's Office at 316-660-9110.
- A simple site plan showing the proposed location of the structure(s) on the site indicating distances to other existing buildings on the site and the distances to property lines. The site plan does not have to be to scale or professionally designed.
- Property owner information
- For new houses, specific information to indicate any required drainage grades and/or elevations on the site and/or for the structure. This information is available from the Subdivision Grading/Drainage Plan that is approved with the original subdivision plat approval. Specific lot grading/drainage requirements are included on subdivision plats approved in the City of Wichita since 1990. A survey performed by a Kansas-licensed land surveyor or engineer must be obtained, at the contractor or owner's expense, at the time of foundation wall completion. The survey verifies that basic lot grading elevations and foundation floors and walls are correct and in compliance with the approved Subdivision Plat Grading/Drainage Plan.
- For pre-fabricated houses (other than "mobile homes") that are to be erected in residential zoning districts (other than districts zoned for mobile homes), the prefabricated home must be engineered/designed to have a permanent foundation, and must meet specific other criteria as a "residential design manufactured home" (minimum roof pitch, type of roofing and siding materials, porch design, etc.). The pre-fabricated home must also have specifications and certified "third party" inspection

information that assures that the pre-fabricated home was constructed to minimum national building code standards. If a new home is to be served by a private water well (for potable drinking water) or by an on-site sewer disposal system (such as a septic system), connection to such systems must first be approved by the Wichita Environmental Services Department, 1900 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, (316) 268-8351, before a building permit is issued. In some areas of the City, water wells may not be allowed due to contamination of groundwater in that area, and septic systems may not be allowed if the present system is failing or if soils and the site are not conducive to an on-site sewage disposal system.

### For Commercial Building Permits

**NOTE:** Commercial project applications are preliminarily reviewed for completeness at the OCI permit desk by a Building Permit Examiner. Incomplete project plans may not be officially accepted for plan review, or logged-in until all required application materials are submitted. See the Office of Central Inspection City of Wichita Plan Submittal Information form in the Appendix that is utilized by Building Permit Examiners during plan log-in.

- New Construction and Additions
  - Plan Submittal Information Sheet (see form in Appendix)
  - Project Valuation Data Sheet (see form in Appendix)
  - Three complete sets of Project Plans, each set to include:
    - Site utility and drainage/grading plans sealed by Kansas-licensed design professional
    - Architectural drawings/plans sealed by Kansas-licensed architect
    - Structural drawings/plans sealed by Kansas-licensed design professional
    - Mechanical plans sealed by Kansas-licensed design professional
    - Plumbing plans sealed by a Kansas-licensed design professional
    - Electrical plans sealed by a Kansas-licensed design professional
    - A Code Plan prepared by the Architect that summarizes life safety design issues, occupancy and construction classification issues (see sample Code Plan in Appendix)

### Process Improvement Points

Commercial building permit projects, especially for new construction and large commercial additions, must frequently provide separate engineered drawings to the Engineering Office for review and approval. Often, this is not realized or initiated until after the building permit application/plans have been submitted for review, causing possible significant delays in issuance of conditional or full building permits. To minimize delays contact OCI Plans Examination at (316) 268-4477 or Public Works/Engineering at (316) 268-4266 prior to submission of building permit plans, and/or to schedule a Preliminary Project Review.

- At least one site utility and drainage/grading plan with impervious area calculations
- Three ADDITIONAL site utility and drainage/grading plans
- Specialty plans, that may include the following:
  - Landscape plans: Five copies minimum, eight copies if the project is in a Community Unit Plan (CUP) or Planned Unit Development (PUD). Submit landscape plans to Planning Department, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall.
  - Fire alarm and/or smoke detection plans, if required for project: Four copies minimum. Submit to Fire Department/Fire Prevention, 11<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall
  - Automatic Fire extinguishing plans: Three copies minimum. Submit to Fire Department/Fire Prevention, 11<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall.
  - Miscellaneous specialty plans (furniture layout, retail sales fixture plan, kitchen equipment, etc.): Three copies minimum, submit to OCI.
  - Tenant lease plan: Two copies for all new multi-tenant buildings, submit to OCI.
  - Landscape plans: Five copies minimum, eight copies if the project is in a Community Unit Plan (CUP) or Planned Unit Development (PUD). Submit landscape plans to Planning Department, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall.
  - Fire alarm and/or smoke detection plans, if required for project: Four copies minimum. Submit to Fire Department/Fire Prevention, 11<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall
  - Automatic Fire extinguishing plans: Three copies minimum. Submit to Fire Department/Fire Prevention, 11<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall.
  - Miscellaneous specialty plans (furniture layout, retail sales fixture plan, kitchen equipment, etc.): Three copies minimum, submit to OCI.
- One specification book.
- For projects in which one or more acres of ground will be disturbed, the contractor must send a copy of the Notice of Intent (NOI) application form to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Department of Bureau of Water, Industrial Programs, 1000 SW Jackson, Suite 420, Topeka, KS 66612-1367.

## Process Improvement Points

➤ **Remodeling, including changes in use and occupancy classifications**

- Plan Submittal Information Sheet
- Project Valuation Data Sheet
- Three complete sets of project plans, each set to include:
  - Site utility and drainage/grading plans sealed by Kansas-licensed design professional.
  - Architectural drawings/plans sealed by Kansas-licensed architect.
  - Structural drawings/plans sealed by Kansas-licensed design professional (only required if significant structural changes are being made).
  - Mechanical plans sealed by Kansas-licensed design professional (only required if new mechanical equipment and ductwork is being installed or altered).
  - Plumbing plans sealed by a Kansas-licensed design professional.
  - Landscape plans: Five copies minimum, eight copies if the project is in a Community Unit Plan (CUP) or Planned Unit Development (PUD). Submit landscape plans to Planning Department, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall.
  - Fire alarm and/or smoke detection plans, if required for project: Four copies minimum. Submit to Fire Department/Fire Prevention, 11<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall.
  - Automatic Fire extinguishing plans: Three copies minimum. Submit to Fire Department/Fire Prevention, 11<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall.
  - Miscellaneous specialty plans (furniture layout, retail sales fixture plan, kitchen equipment, etc.): Three copies minimum, submit to OCI.

**Process Improvement Points**

For commercial plan review application submission, the items that are most frequently absent from the submittal package are the “Plan Submittal Information Sheets”, the site plan with impervious area calculations and the Code Plan.

## **Step 2- Construction Plan Review**

The plan review process is summarize in Chapter 10 of this handbook.

## **Step 3- Fees**

Building permit fees are based on construction cost. You may call the OCI permit desk at (316) 268-4461 to obtain permit fees based on valuation or the current permit fee schedule. Basic Plan Review fee is 65% of the base building permit fee.

## **Step 4- Progress Prints/Plans**

- Construction may start prior to final plan submission.
- New buildings or additions only.
- Additional 50% of plan review fee charged.
- Minimum drawings must include site plans and detailed footing and foundation plans.
- Submit conditional permit request form

## **Step 5- Conditional Building Permit**

- Construction may start prior to completion of plan review or resolution of required Plan Review revisions.
- Available for new buildings or additions only  
Additional 25% of plan review fee will be charged if issued prior to targeted full Plan Review completion.
- Full set of project plans required.
- Submission of a conditional permit request form is required.
- Up-front Conditional Permit requests will be reviewed within five business days.

## **Step 6 – Full Permit Issuance**

After permit applications and plans have been approved, the files are checked to ensure that all required information has been obtained. The permit applicant and/or the general contractor associated with the building permit are then notified by phone and by postcard mailer that the permit may be issued, and are informed of any administrative items needed for final permit issuance.

## **Process Improvement Points**

All building construction requires a City of Wichita licensed contractor. Only the contractor or authorized representative can pick up the permit. An authorized representative is designated by the license holder to be allowed to pick up permits in his/her name.

## **Right-of-Way Permits**

This form of permitting is described in detail in Chapter 8 of this handbook.

## **Public Improvements**

This form of permitting is described in detail in Chapter 8 of this handbook.

## **Trade Permits (Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing and Sewer)**

Information regarding the types and number of trade items, e.g., the number and size of electrical services, the number of electrical circuits, the number and size of electric motors, the number of electric outlets, the number, size and/or type of furnaces or air conditioning units, the number of water heaters, the number of waste, gas, or drain openings, etc. This information can be taken at the permit counter or submitted on a standard OCI Electrical,

## **Sign Permits**

The City of Wichita has a Sign Code in Chapter 24.04 of the Code of the City of Wichita. Copies of the ordinance may be obtained in the Office of Central Inspection on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall, 455 North Main St., by calling OCI at (316) 268-4479, or on the City of Wichita website, [www.wichita.gov](http://www.wichita.gov). Any questions regarding private property signage may also be directed to this number.

The Sign Code regulates permanent and temporary signage, including signs that are painted directly onto exterior walls and portable signs, on private property. Signs are regulated with respect to zoning district classification, size, height, construction, and spacing from other signs and property lines. The Sign Code also regulates time frames for temporary signage (such as banners). The Sign Code regulates both on-site free-standing signs and building signs, as well as off-site billboard advertising signs. Signage is often further regulated by special sign provisions in Unified Zoning Code (UZC) protective overlays and special use approvals (such as Community Unit Plans, Planned Unit Developments, Zoning Protective Overlays, special Zoning Overlay Districts such as Old Town and in Historic Districts, and Zoning Conditional Use Approvals).

## **Process Improvement Points**

Plan review fees must be paid at the time of plan submittal. Prior to preparing a check, contact the Permit Desk at (316) 268-4461 to ensure the plan review fee amount is correct.

Building permit fees are paid at the time a conditional or full permit is issued. Before preparing a check, it is also beneficial to contact the Permit Desk at (316) 268-4461 to ascertain the current building permit fee amount.

Replacement or repainting of sign panels, or faces, also require a sign permit, even if the sign can or structure size is not being modified.

All permanent signs are required to be installed by

sign installers who have been licensed by the City of Wichita Office of Central Inspection. Such sign installers must be bonded, insured, and are required to annually renew their licenses.

### **Step 1 – Sign Permit Application**

Sign permit application forms are available in the Office of Central Inspection at the permit counter or from the OCI sign section, 268-4479. A complete application consists of:

- A completed application form
- A site plan indicating the location of the proposed sign on the building wall or property, and its distance to and location with respect to other signs on the property. The size of other building signs on the same building elevation should be noted and the size of any freestanding signs relative to an application for a new or altered freestanding sign should be noted.
- Sign drawings showing the size, dimensions, color, materials and construction details of the sign, including height above grade.

**Sign permit applications may be submitted in several ways, including:**

- Deliver to the permit desk in the Office of Central Inspection on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall.
- Mail: 455 N. Main, Wichita, KS 67202
- Fax: (316) 268-4663

### **Step 2 – Sign Permit Review**

Sign permit applications are reviewed by the Office of Central Inspection Sign and Commercial Zoning Section for compliance with the Sign Code regulations and the zoning district in which the sign is located. Specific sign restrictions that apply to any sign in a special zoning overlay or conditional use approval are also checked.

### **Step 3 – Permit Issuance**

Once a sign application is approved, the permit may be issued. The applicant will be notified of the approval by staff.

### **Process Improvement Points**

Sign permits must be obtained separately from building or trade construction permits.

Although some commercial project plans submitted for a building permit may show signs and/or sign locations the commercial building permit plan review does not include a sign code review or sign placement/erection approval

#### **Step 4- Sign Permit Fees**

Sign Permit fees are based on the type and size of the sign. A schedule of fees may be obtained from the Office of Central Inspection. The fee for a specific sign, given the type and size of sign can be obtained from the Sign staff at (316) 268-4479.

Generally, fees must be paid at the time of sign permit issuance and may be paid by cash, check or most credit cards.

However, licensed sign contractors may participate in the Fax Permit Program for Sign permits, wherein OCI will review and issue a permit approval (or denial) by fax within a minimum of 24 hours of the faxed permit application receipt. Participation in the Fax Permit Program also allows contractors to pay automatically for each permit issued by credit card, or by cash or check on a weekly basis for all permits issued during the previous week.

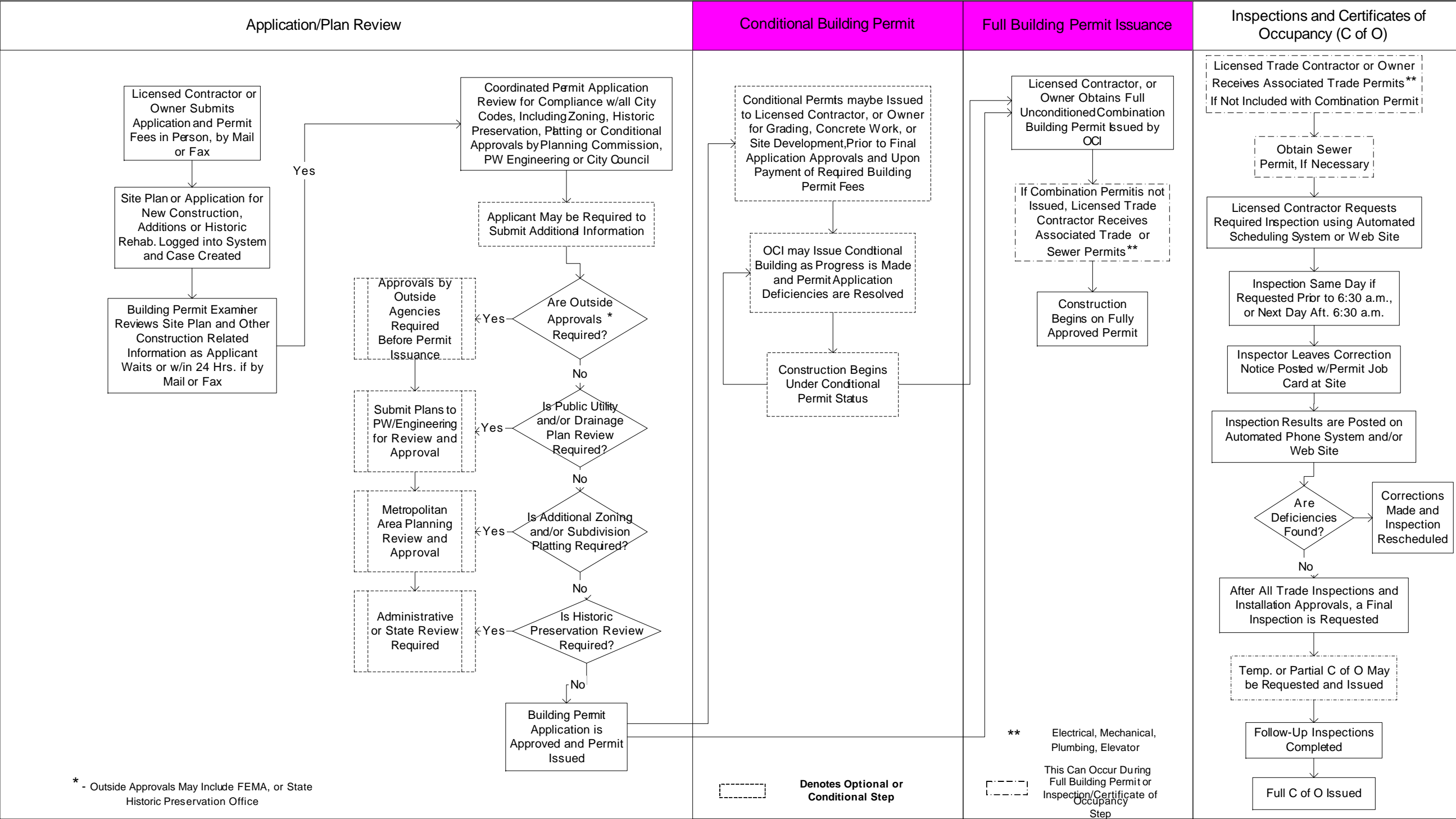
#### **Step 5- Sign Inspection**

All signs must be inspected upon completion by OCI staff to assure that the sign was installed as approved, and so the Sign Permit can be closed. Contractors or permit applicants are responsible for requesting a final sign installation inspection by calling (316) 268-4479.

#### **Process Improvement Points**

CITY OF WICHITA

PERMIT REVIEW PROCESS for RESIDENTIAL APPLICATIONS (Single and Two-Family - Additions, Remodeling and New Construction)



CITY OF WICHITA  
PERMIT REVIEW PROCESS for COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS

